GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1375
ANSWERED ON:05.03.2013
DIVERSION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND
Tomar Shri Narendra Singh

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total geographical area of the country along with the area of cultivable and barren land in each State/UT;

(b) whether a large tract of agricultural land in urban, semi-urban and rural areas are being developed by real estate agencies for housing needs of the increasing population in the country;

(c) if so, the area of land diverted for real estate purpose in each State/UT during each of the last three years and the current year;

(d) whether the Government proposes to bring any comprehensive legislation to stop the diversion of agricultural land for real estate purpose; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and the time by which such legislation is proposed to be introduced?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES (SHRI TARIQ ANWAR)

(a): As per available estimates, the total geographical area is 328.73 million hectare; of which 182.47 million hectare is cultivable and about 16.78 million hectare is barren and unculturable land across the country. State and Union Territories-wise details annexed.

(b) to (e): Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture does not maintain any data regarding diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes such as urbanization, roads, industries, housing etc.

As per the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, land including transfer & alienation of agricultural land, falls under the purview of the State Government and, therefore, it is for the State Governments to frame suitable policy/enact legislation to prevent the diversion of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes. However, with a view to prevent use of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes and sustaining food security of the country, Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture has formulated a National Policy for Farmers -2007 (NPF-2007), which envisages that prime farmland must be conserved for agriculture except under exceptional circumstances, provided that the agencies that are provided with agricultural land for non-agricultural projects should compensate for treatment and full development of equivalent degraded/wastelands elsewhere. Further, for non-agricultural purposes, as far as possible, land with low biological potential for farming should be earmarked and allocated.

Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources has also developed a National Rehabilitation & Resettlement Policy, 2007 which envisages that only the minimum area of land commensurate with the purpose of a project may be acquired and, as far as possible, projects may be set up on wasteland, degraded land or un-irrigated land, Acquisition of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes in the projects may be kept to the minimum; multi-cropped land may be avoided to the extent possible for such purposes and acquisition of irrigated land, if unavoidable, may be kept to the minimum.